

Washington, DC - U.S. Rep. **Brad Miller (NC-13)** offered a job creation amendment to restore cuts in the President's 2005 budget for the Small Business Administration and the Manufacturing Extension Partnership. The amendment was rejected on a party line vote by the House Rules Committee Wednesday night.

The amendment would have also increased funding for adult training and dislocated worker programs and extended federal unemployment compensation. Additionally, the amendment would have provided significant additional funding for community colleges, a pledge President Bush made in his State of the Union address but has not yet fulfilled.

"The Bush Administration and Congressional Republicans just do not see the world through the eyes of people who have to work for a living," Miller said. "Their budget gives huge tax cuts to Americans making more than a million dollars a year, but cheats community colleges and programs proven to help small businesses create jobs here in America."

Another key part of Miller's amendment addressed the lack of assistance for the more than 750,000 Americans who have exhausted their regular unemployment benefits and still can't find a job.

Miller's job creation amendment also would have:

- **Fully funded the President's \$250 million Community College Initiative** - In President Bush's State of the Union address, the President highlighted a plan to increase community college funding by \$250 million. However, the President's Budget only devoted \$5 million to the new initiative.

- **Increased funding by \$71 million for the Manufacturing Extension Partnership** - The MEP, jointly funded by federal and state governments and private entities, helps small businesses, primarily small manufacturers, adopt advanced manufacturing technologies and competitive business practices. MEP is administered by the Department of Commerce. North Carolina's MEP program helped NC companies save \$85.6 million in 2002 alone.

- **Provided \$6.5 billion to continue the Temporary Extended Unemployment Compensation program through June** - The TEUC program provides 13 extra weeks of benefits for workers whose regular unemployment benefits run out before they are able to find a

job. The Republican controlled Congress allowed the TEUC program to expire at the end of December, despite urging from Congressman Miller and other Democrats to continue the program.

- **Added \$150 million for training and worker dislocation programs** - The President's budget converts these programs into block grants and cuts their funding, such as a 25 percent cut for career and technical education programs which provide training for the unemployed and those seeking to upgrade their employability skills.

- **Restored \$30 million cut by the Bush administration to Business Assistance Programs and Microloans** - These loan programs help low-income entrepreneurs who have been shut out of traditional capital markets.

- **Provided \$100 million to the SBA's 7(a) loan program** - The caps, restrictions, and temporary shutdown of this program by the Bush administration has resulted in the loss of billions of dollars from our economy. This popular program provides loans on favorable terms to small businesses and allows funds to be used for operating capital. It accounts for 30 percent of all long-term small business lending, and it is a proven catalyst for job creation and economic development. In 2003, SBA approved 862 loans in North Carolina resulting in \$144,966,000 of much needed capital to small businesses across the state.

Instead of strengthening the program in the wake of its financial crisis earlier this year, the President provided no funding for the 7(a) program in his FY05 budget. The administration instead proposes to run the program by taxing the small businesses that use it.